CENTENNIAL

OF

Court Street Baptist Church,

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA.

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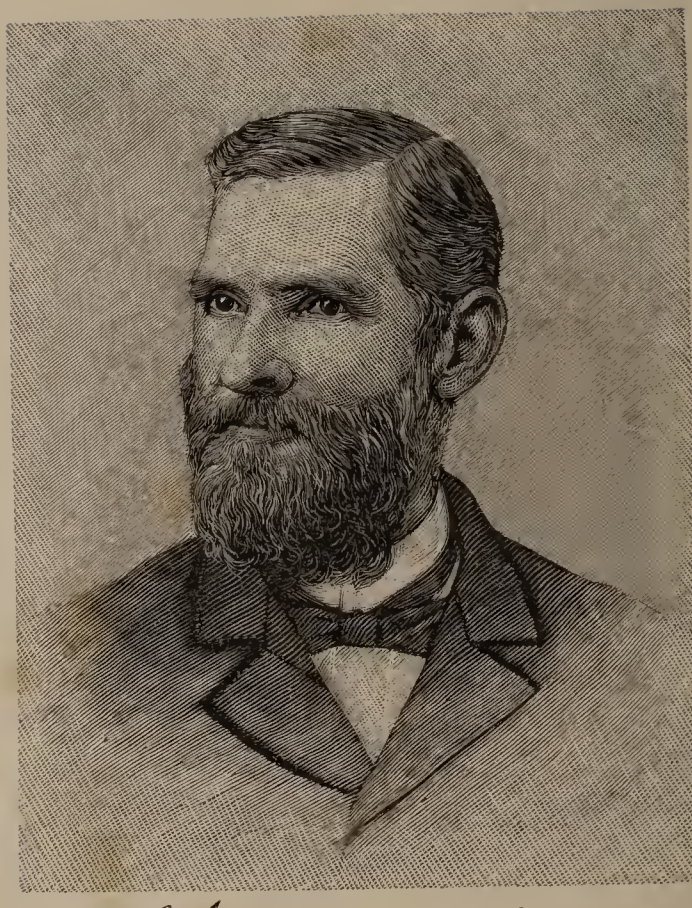

Affectionately
A. E. Owen

CENTENNIAL

OF

Court Street Baptist Church,

OF THE

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH,

VIRGINIA,

Held September 8th, 1889.

PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.

THE Court Street Baptist Church, in the City of Portsmouth, decided to celebrate the Hundredth Year of its existence.* The best manner of doing so was not so easy to decide. The arrangement finally agreed upon seemed entirely satisfactory. Rev. C. H. Ryland, D.D., was selected because of his peculiar adaptation to deliver an address upon the History of the Virginia Baptists. Then, to have the connection between the Baptists of the State and the Court Street Church brought into harmony and made complete, Rev. George J. Hobday, who is a son of the Church and one of her brightest ornaments, was selected to write the History of the Church. And to make the record symmetrical, Rev. J. W. M. Williams, D.D., who was the first man the Church ever sent into the ministry, and who has occupied a prominent position in the Baptist Denomination for nearly half a century, was asked to furnish an outline of the Preachers whom the Church has sent into the ministry. This book is the result of their labors.

A. E. OWEN.

*This meeting was held in the audience-room, Sunday, September 8, 1889.

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COURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH,

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

BY CHARLES H. RYLAND, D.D.,
Secretary of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

"*Call to remembrance the former days.*"—HEB. x. 32.

THIS great assemblage attests the interest taken in the occasion which brings us together. This Church, these surroundings, are historic. Why should we not urn the ashes of the dead, and speak of labors that will never die? To write the history of the one hundred years of church life here enacted, and thus preserve it for the encouragement of the living and the instruction of succeeding generations, seems no less a privilege than a duty.

The immediate review of the official records of the century's work you have committed to other hands. If it be true, as Carlyle says, that "histories

are as perfect as the historian is wise," then you will have not only a graceful, but most trustworthy tribute from my friend and brother, a son of this Church, than whom no one is more competent to tell the story.

I am here in the name of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society to express the interest they take in your notable anniversary, to congratulate you upon the achievements of the past, and to rejoice with you in the unfoldings of Providence which seems in the unity and faith which mark the present to be leading you on to yet nobler and more successful attainments.

Your beloved pastor, in his call upon me for this service, said I must preach, and from God's Word I have culled a suggestive thought, around which I shall try to weave, in brief speech, a few of those thrilling facts and illustrative incidents which anticipated the events of which the historian shall speak at a later hour. If the student of nature can "find tongues in trees, books in running brooks and sermons in stones," surely, out of the history of God's people called by the Baptist name, as grafted upon the early annals of our land, there shall not be lacking in the great issues which heaven joined under their leadership profitable and inspiring lessons for their children.

Let it not be supposed, because one hundred years is a long time as it reaches far back into the past, that the planting of this Church marked the beginning of Baptist history in Virginia. Back of the one hundred years you celebrate lies almost another century of seed-time and harvest, when the soil was virgin and the laborers were few; when there lived men "fired with a zeal and courage no obstacle could impede"—heroes akin to those of old, "of whom the world was not worthy"—upon whose banners were inscribed those God-given, world-enlightening, liberty-securing, soul-saving principles, whose planting here made America free, and whose ultimate enthronement will surely break and remove the shackles of despotism the world over.

In tracing the successful planting of Baptist Churches in Virginia, the most reliable accounts point clearly to the territory now comprising the Portsmouth Association as the spot where church organization first took shape. There were, beyond doubt, in Virginia and in her sister State of North Carolina, as early as 1695, scattered communities of our brethren; but not until the yeomanry of Isle of Wight and Surry Counties asked friends in London for "ministers to instruct and guide them," and the coming of Elder

Robert Nordin in 1714, did the purpose to form a Church bring forth fruit. On the banks of the James, within easy reach of the spot where your "vine and fig-tree" are now so luxuriously growing, the first Baptist Church on Virginia soil was planted one hundred and seventy-five years ago. Within a brief period other Churches sprang up, both in Southern Virginia and Eastern North Carolina, and about 1765 united in forming the Kehukee Baptist Association. This union continued till 1790, when the Virginia Churches withdrew, and, under the hospitable roof of this Court Street Church formed another sisterhood, which continues to this day. There were nineteen Churches which constituted this band.

Two facts are mentioned in Read and Burkitt's history, bearing on this separation, which will interest you: first, that "the division was not occasioned by any discordant principles, nor want of love, but for convenience;" and, second, "The first meeting was at Portsmouth, in Virginia, and for that reason and from the polite treatment of the gentlemen of that town, it took the name of the Virginia Portsmouth Baptist Association."

Without going further into the Portsmouth history, it is appropriate for me to say that similar

movements to that which established the first Church in Lower Virginia were made at a somewhat later date in other parts of the State. It seems plain that the Baptists entered the State from three directions. These streams united, and in a few years the liberty-loving Baptists became a power in the land.

It is well known that at this period of Virginia history great questions were stirring the public mind. Some of these were incident to the rising desire of the people to be free from the political control of the mother country, and others from a no less strong wish and purpose to break the fetters of ecclesiastical domination by which they were bound.

The Baptists, active in their espousal of both of these great movements, were especially conspicuous leaders in the promulgation and defence of soul liberty.

That is a very circumscribed and unjust view of Baptist principles and distinguishing characteristics which narrows down their creed and defines it to be "immersion the only Baptism." High up among the articles of their faith stands that doctrine which necessarily precedes personal acceptance of Christ, and consequently repentance, faith and baptism. The doctrine

is this: the inherent right of every soul to decide for itself upon all matters of religion, without human dictation or control,—or, in other words, absolute freedom of conscience and complete separation between "Church and State." However divided upon minor points of faith and practice, all history proves that the Baptists of Colonial Virginia, from whatever point they came, were united upon this great cardinal doctrine of the word of God. Dr. Semple graphically describes the immediate issue before our fathers, when he eloquently says, alluding to the condition of things in the Colony and their relation thereto: "There was an established religion; the Nebuchadnezzars of the age required all men to bow down to the golden image; these Hebrew children refused and were cast into the burning fiery furnace of persecution."

With their eye fixed upon this boon they were not slow to recognize the fact that the right to worship God as they pleased was inseparably connected with the freedom of their country. "From the beginning. . . unremitting in their exertions to obtain liberty of conscience," they were everywhere known in their political creed as "republicans from interest as well as principle;" winning as the reward of their splendid patriotism

the rich praise of George Washington, who declared, "They have been throughout America uniformly and almost unanimously the firm friends of civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution."

With clean hands and uplifted brows they came out of the stern strife of the long War of Independence, and with united voice exclaimed, "Blessed be God, all scruples now are removed by the glorious revolution, which gives all under its auspicious government equal and impartial liberty!"

But the recital I must so briefly make of the work and labor of love of our fathers will not be complete without at least a glance at the keen sufferings they endured to win the priceless jewel of soul freedom and place it in the corner-stone of America's Temple of Liberty. I can but partially withdraw the veil which hides the events of far-off years, and yet the few disclosures which greet your eyes will surely stir your hearts, warm your blood, incite to profounder gratitude and prompt to nobler endeavor. It is said that the chamois, swift of foot, when pursued by the hunter is never satisfied till it climbs the rugged steeps and slakes its thirst in the highest, boldest springs of the Alpine range. So, when pressed

by the questionings and defamations regarding the Baptists, which, though lulled, have not wholly subsided, do we love to climb and drink from those fountains of unselfish devotion and vicarious suffering found in the headlands of our history. I believe that, like myself, you will never fail to find in what our sires bore that which will purify, enlighten and stimulate.

The first instance of actual imprisonment for conscience' sake of which we have account occurred in Spottsylvania County, in June, 1768. Several Baptist preachers, among them John Waller, James Childs and Lewis Craig, were seized by a sheriff while in the act of conducting the worship of God, and carried before a magistrate in the meeting-house yard. The officer compelled them, under bonds of one thousand pounds, to appear at Court two days after. When they appeared before the Court they were vehemently accused of *disturbing the peace*, and a lawyer who prosecuted them said: "May it please Your Worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace. They cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat." Refusing to quit preaching, they were sent to close jail, where they were kept, one of them four weeks, the rest forty-three days.

The historian Semple says: "As they were moving on from the court-house to the prison through the streets of Fredericksburg they sang the hymn,

'Broad is the road that leads to death.'

This had an awful appearance" and no doubt deeply stirred the public mind. While they were in jail they preached through the grated windows to the crowds that gathered. When they were released, "which was a kind of triumph, they resumed their labors with redoubled vigor, gathering fortitude from their sufferings and thanking God they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ and his Gospel." The same history tells us that in like manner William Webber and Joseph Anthony were seized and imprisoned in Chesterfield County Jail. The people had invited them to come and preach for them, and the simple success of the gospel was the inflaming cause of their rigid treatment. Refusing, as had their brethren in Spottsylvania, to promise that they would cease preaching, they were kept in confinement four long months. Five other ministers were at different times incarcerated in this same prison for preaching the gospel.

In August, 1771, Elders. Webber, Waller, Greenwood and Ware were seized by a magis-

trate and two sheriffs in the County of Middlesex and thrust, 9 o'clock one Saturday night, into the horrid jail at Urbanna, where they lay (fed a part of the time on bread and water) for forty-six days. In the Richmond College Library are preserved the original orders for the arrest, trial and imprisonment of these godly men, which expressly recite that they were thus imprisoned because they had "taken upon themselves to teach or preach" and were acting "under pretense of the exercise of religion in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the Church of England."

In 1772 a fourth instance of imprisonment for preaching occurred in King and Queen County. James Greenwood and William Lovall were seized while preaching and imprisoned sixteen days. In March, 1774, when Piscataway Church in Essex County was dedicated, a warrant was issued for the arrest of all the Baptist preachers who should attend. Four were arrested and three sent to prison.

Near by your own Church home, Elders Barrow and Mintz were seized by wicked and ungodly men, dragged from the pulpit down to the water of Nansemond River, in order, they said, "as they loved dipping, to give them enough of it."

Repeatedly holding them under the water until they were nearly drowned, they would raise them up and ask them "if they believed." At last Elder Barrow said, "I believe you will *drown me.*" They were then released.

But I cannot enlarge upon these cruelties. I have but given samples of the indignities to which the heralds of the cross were subjected. Truly might Bishop Hawks, the Episcopal historian, say, "Cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new modes of punishment and annoyance." Semple says of one preacher, John Waller, that he lay at different times one hundred and thirteen days in four different jails, "besides suffering buffetings, stripes, reproaches, etc."

And yet they would preach. They took as their motto the answer of the Apostles, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Animated by an ardent desire for the advancement of their Master's Kingdom, they sallied forth in every direction, spreading the tidings of peace and salvation wherever they went." "Without visible shield or buckler they moved on, steady to their purpose, undismayed by the terrific hosts of Satan, backed by the strong arm of civil authority. Magistrates and mobs, priests and sheriffs, courts

and prisons, all vainly combined to divert them from their object. He that was for them was greater than he that was against them; they found that

> "Prisons would palaces prove,
> If Jesus would dwell with them there!"

As the reward of their devotion a triumph was meted out to them. "The decree finally went forth that none should be forced to worship the golden image. The establishment was overturned."

For the wisdom and godliness and courage of those times that tried men's souls, my brethren, we cannot be too grateful. The dissenters of this momentous period, led by the Baptists who labored and suffered more than they all, secured the boon. It has blessed the world.

No just tribute can ever be paid to what our fathers were able to accomplish for us. They rest from their labors and their works do follow them. While we enshrine them in our hearts, let me exhort you to cherish the principles for which they suffered. Write them upon the doorposts of your houses, teach them to your children, defend them with your ballots, pray for their spread the world over, for they are the prin-

ciples of God's word and inseparable from the highest triumphs of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus have I sought to sketch a few of the events which led up to the more settled and quiet era which gave birth to your venerable and honored Church organization. By the time the great questions had become settled the Churches had multiplied in numbers and efficiency, district associations had been formed, a General Association had taken charge of the general interests of the denomination, religious freedom had been firmly established and there reigned throughout our borders peace and the blessings of stable government.

You will, my brethren, exalt the God of your fathers to-day. He planted us and He has upheld us. As to Israel of old, he has been the Pillar of Fire by night and the Pillar of Cloud by day, leading us out of the wilderness of our trials and sorrows into a land that flows with milk and honey. As in your Church capacity you "call to mind the former days;" as you survey God's mercies within your own bounds and rejoice in the evidences of His Fatherly care in all these years; as you raise the stone of help and crown it with your Ebenezer, saying,

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!" you will pray that His truth may run and be glorified till the wide earth shall hear, and heed, and live by faith in His name. Amen!

PRESENT CHURCH BUILDING.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

COURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, VA.

BY REV. GEORGE J. HOBDAY.

AN hundred years! How long it seems to man, how short it is to God! Not one here who has lived as long, not one, perhaps, whose memory can go back half as far, and, but for the connecting links in persons and records, the past would be a blank to us all.

One hundred years ago yesterday—that is, September the 7th, 1789—the Baptists in this city entered upon their career as a Church of Jesus Christ, and we are here assembled to appropriately celebrate her centennial anniversary; to trace through all these years, as best we may, her works and ways, her bright days and dark days, her prosperity and adversity, God's dealings with her for an hundred years.

The task would be comparatively easy and truly pleasurable, if her earthly records were at hand,

but, like many other churches, her record is chiefly on high, and will be revealed only when the books are opened in the last day. Still, there is much left us in records—private and public, civil and ecclesiastical—in persons in and out of the Church, from which we may gather material to weave an almost unbroken narrative for our consideration to-day.

Such a duty the Church has requested the writer of this paper to perform, and he now respectfully asks your attention to the result of his labors.

It would seem very proper to preface our sketch of the history of this Church with some account of the Baptist history in Virginia, but, as that duty will be performed by another speaker, we will content ourselves with a brief statement of the religious condition of the town at the time this Church began its career.

The oldest Church organization in the town is the Episcopal, Trinity Church, having been erected in 1762, just ten years after Portsmouth became a town.

Next in order were the Methodists, of whom Dr. Bennett says: "Early in 1772 Robert Williams, an Irish local preacher, licensed by John Wesley, appeared in Norfolk. He was invited to come to Portsmouth by one Isaac Luke." He

came and preached under two persimmon trees on the corner of South and Effingham Streets, probably on the very spot where our South Street Chapel now stands. In April, 1789, their membership was 953, about equally divided between the white and colored people.

The Presbyterians did not come until later. Rev. John D. Paxton, the Presbyterian pastor in Norfolk in 1814, used to preach here occasionally, but the church was not formally constituted until 1822.

So, then, the Baptists were the third denomination to establish a church in this city.

As to the *town* of Portsmouth, it had enjoyed that title only thirty-seven years, having been raised to that dignity in 1752. The government of the town was vested in nine trustees, with few and limited powers.

The United States Navy-yard, as such, did not exist, though there was a ship-yard at Gosport, which belonged to the Commonwealth. There was no court-house or jail, these buildings being at Berkley.

The inhabitants of the town were, for the most part, merchants and mechanics, chiefly ship carpenters, and a floating population of sailors.

The first Baptist preachers who visited this sec-

tion were David Barrow and Edward Mintz, who, in 1778, preached at a private house near Sleepy Hole Ferry, on the Nansemond River, which resulted in the formation of the Shoulder's Hill Church in January, 1785. Some of the members of this Church lived in Portsmouth. There was also residing here Rev. Thomas Armistead, an officer in the United States army during the Revolutionary War, which had closed only seven years ago. He, with the assistance of Rev. Elijah Baker, one of the most remarkable preachers of his day, and at this time a resident of Northampton County, Va., were instrumental in collecting the few resident Baptists, and suggesting to them the propriety of forming themselves into a Church of Jesus Christ, and accordingly applied to the Kehukee Association in May, 1789, "to send help to constitute them into a Church." Elders John McGlamre and David Barrow, with powers to add to their number, were appointed to perform that duty.

On Saturday morning, September 5, 1789, the committee met here, composed as follows: Elders David Barrow, Thomas Armistead, Elijah Baker and William Morrice and Laymen James McClenny, Levan Blake, Etheldred Lancaster and John Moore.

A committee on "order of business" was appointed, and the Conference adjourned until 6 o'clock P.M. At which time the committee reported as follows:

1. "We, your committee recommend to your consideration the expediency of a Constitution in this place. Considered and agreed to by the Conference."

2. "We recommed also to your consideration, whether it would not be more to the glory of God, the benefit and convenience of the brethren and people of this place to establish a Constitution. Answered in the affirmative."

3. "We recommend to your consideration what means would be most expedient to receive such Baptists in and about these towns that would wish to join our Constitution, who are members of no Church at present. Answered that when the Church is not particularly acquainted with them, to call on them for their experience."

A committee was then appointed to draw up a Church Covenant, and the Conference adjourned until Monday morning.

On Monday morning, September 7th, the Conference re-assembled, the Covenant was read, and the following *brethren* signified their willingness to go into the organization of the Church:

Levan Blake, Thomas Crafts, Harrison Benthall, John Moore, John Foster and George Billups, six in all, and *all males.* There must have been some females; if not, it is the first Baptist Church that we ever heard of that began its existence without a single female member. Still, we are following the record, and it is worthy of remark that this entry, standing, as it does, alone, on a fly-leaf of the oldest church record possessed by the Church, has been thus preserved to us by the forethought of some wise person, seemingly having been copied from the minutes of the Kehukee Association for that year. There is no other record made of what the Church did for forty years. We know not who the Church officers were. We know not where the first meeting was held.

Another difficulty presents itself in the fact that for many years after this the Church here embraced Norfolk as well in its organization. Still, there are evidences that the original meeting was held in Portsmouth, and that the constituent names mentioned above were residents of this town.

In the absence of Church records, we fortunately have some facts in the early history of this Church preserved for our use in Burkitt's History of the Kehukee Association, and Semple's His-

tory of Virginia Baptists, from which we will freely quote.

Burkitt says, "Elder Thomas Armistead was the first pastor who took the care of this Church and his labors were blessed for a season."

Of him Semple says: "He was a man of high family and rich connections, and served as an officer (major) in the American Army during the Revolutionary War. He was universally esteemed as an officer of the most unwavering courage. He was a man of strong mind, and in all likelihood would have made a figure in the military line if he had not become a Baptist. This, by lessening his military ardour, and well as rendering him somewhat unpopular in the army, probably prevented that distinction to which he might have been otherwise raised."

Six members with a military pastor was a small beginning, but they had truth and right on their side and, like Marion's men, could sing:

"Our band is few but true and tried,
Our leader frank and bold;
And sinners all will tremble
When Armistead's name is told."

In the spring of the next year, May, 1790, the Church was admitted into the Kehukee Association, and at the October meeting of the Associa-

tion it was decided to divide that body; this Church with twenty others withdrew, and in May, 1791, met in this city and formed what is known as the Portsmouth Association. It was an important meeting, and this Church must have been somewhat prominent to have been selected as the place in which to form the new association.

During this year, 1791, the Church had some trouble with a preacher from Europe named Frost. Burkitt says, "At first he seemed to be approved of; but soon began to deny the faith of the Church, and preach the doctrines of *free-will*. This man caused great uneasiness in the Church. The brethren appointed a Committee to wait upon and try to gain him over to embrace the principles of the Church; but he remained incorrigible. The Church appointed another committee to go and try to silence him, but could not prevail." At a meeting on the following Wednesday night, at which he had determined to preach, a memorable scene occurred, at which "the Lord interfered in behalf of his distressed Church. For when Frost went to preach, and took his text, which was 'He shall thoroughly purge his floor and gather the wheat into his garner,' and coming to the words, 'purge his floor,' his tongue failed, he cried, 'let us pray,' but sank on his knees and spoke not

another word. He was dead in less than three hours."

At a Conference meeting held June 9, 1792, "Elder Armistead requested the Church to look out another pastor, as he was much indisposed in body and not able to serve them as he ought or wished to do." No successor, however, seems to have been secured, at least for some time.

Elder Armistead soon afterwards resigned the care of the Church, and in 1794 removed to King and Queen County, and entered into mercantile life, preaching whenever an opportunity afforded. He always cherished high notions of honor and resentment, which were formed in the army, and took great delight in settling personal difficulties between others, often volunteering his services. These sentiments were unfavorable to his spirituality and, with some other matters, led to his exclusion from the Baptist Church in 1803. He was, however, restored to fellowship again in 1809, and soon after died. He was fourth cousin to brother Moss W. Armistead, who was for a long time a prominent member of this Church; their great-great grandfathers being brothers.*

* The minutes of the Portsmouth Association for the year 1794 show that 13 baptisms had taken place the year previous, and that the membership of the Church was 113. This is the first record of membership known to us.

Left without a pastor, and having been disturbed by the preaching of Frost, the Church fell into a cold and inactive condition. No Conference meetings were held, and some of the members did backslide. In October, 1796, an effort was made to revive the Church. Neighboring Churches sent their pastors to sit in an advisory council. There was a large element of colored members in the church who claimed a vote in the Conference meetings, and the Church was advised by the Council to recognize them as a wing of the Church, and one Jacob Bishop was placed over them as pastor. He was a good man and highly esteemed as a preacher. He had purchased his own freedom and that of his wife and eldest son. At first the management of his pastorate gave great satisfaction, but soon the colored members became dissatisfied, fearing lest their having a separate pastor would be dishonorable to God, and prove disastrous to themselves. Accordingly they preferred to be subordinate to the white brethren and be considered as formerly simply members of the one Church, which was cheerfully agreed to by the white members.

Not long after this the Church found an undershepherd in Rev. Thomas Etheridge, of whom we can learn nothing save that he served the Church

but a short while. He was succeeded by Rev. Jacob Grigg, an Englishman, who had been on a mission to Africa under the auspices of the English Baptists, and on his return settled here. His pastorate, like that of Etheridge, was very brief, having married and removed to North Carolina.

We have no data upon which now to rely for information until the year 1799, when "Rev. Davis Biggs moved near to Portsmouth, and became pastor of the Churches in *these towns*."

He seems to have been a man of more than ordinary abilities, for we find that under his ministry the Church took on new life, and Burkitt says, "The brethren have been very attentive to Conferences [which seems to have been the index to Christian activity in those days] and have been careful to maintain a good discipline."

As evidence of the zeal which Elder Biggs infused into the Church, the Church for the first time seems to have made an effort to build a house of worship, and on October 10th of this year, 1799, the lot on which the Church now stands was purchased. Davis Biggs, the pastor, John Foster, Geo. Barrett and James Easten, as Trustees for the Church, bought of John Quarles one-half of Hanover Square, fronting on Court Street 113 feet, and running back 90 feet on Queen Street.

The price paid was £32 10*s*. This deed is well preserved in a neat and clear handwriting in the Clerk's Office of Norfolk County, Deed Book No. 38, p. 37, and has only very recently been brought to light.

How interesting it would be to know where the little band had been worshipping up to this time! * It is quite reasonable to suppose that the impetus given by the purchase of the lot did not wane until a meeting-house was erected there.

There are a few members still living who remember the house of worship which fronted on Queen Street, which stood until the present brick house was built. It was a very plain wooden building, provided with galleries and a pulpit entered by a stairway. This in all probability was the first house of worship erected and had been standing about forty years, when it gave way for the brick Church. There must have been great rejoicing when the new Church was entered, and a bright day there seemed to be, but soon the place of the Church was disturbed, for, says Burkitt. "In 1802 there came from Europe and

*Many of the meetings were held in a private house which stood on the southeast corner of Dinwiddie and County Streets, where brother Crafts lived. Other meetings were held at the pastor's home on County Street, in an old house which stood on Trugien property, between Court and Dinwiddie Streets.

took up here a man named Ralph Mather, who called himself a Christian minister. He preached once for the Methodists in their meeting-house in Portsmouth and expected to preach a second time, but some other preacher was introduced in his stead, which very much displeased him. He then came to the Baptists, with a very smooth tongue, and got in favor with many of them and began to rail at the Methodists from the pulpit and from the press. He was soon discovered to be of the Swedenborg profession. Elder Biggs wrote to him that he must acknowledge his error and make public recantation, and if not he must not expect any more to preach in the Baptist Meeting-house." He became very bitter, and failing in Portsmouth, he applied to the brethren in Norfolk for their meeting-house, but was told that the "Church members on either side of the water were one body." He then attempted to draw away a party with him to form a new Church. The plan did not succeed, "his zeal for preaching quickly abated, and he turned into speculation and soon died."

These troubles, led to an awakening of the spiritual condition of the Church. The brethren drew nearer to God and very soon, 1802, an extensive work of grace was enjoyed by the Church, which

resulted in the addition of some eighty to the membership, which was perhaps the most extensive revival the Church had experienced in its history.

About this time, 1804, the brethren in Norfolk withdrew by mutual consent and became a separate Church. It was composed mostly of colored members, and John Mitchell became their pastor. Mitchell soon got into trouble, and in 1817 the best element of this Church withdrew and constituted the Cumberland Street or present First Baptist Church of Norfolk.

This division of the membership left in the Portsmouth Church seventy-two members, with which to begin work for themselves. They were for the most part earnest and consecrated men and women, and as an evidence of it had the Portsmouth Association to meet with them the following year, 1805. Fifteen years prior to this the Association had been organized in this Church, and many were the congratulations on renewing old acquaintances. The Association had grown to 500 in membership, and Semple, the Baptist Historian, was present among the visiting brethren, as was also A. M. Poindexter. James Wright was the preacher of the Introductory sermon and John Bowers was the Moderator. The meeting

was held in May and lasted three days. Elder Biggs continued his pastorate until 1808, having baptized over 100 into the fellowship of the Church, and leaving it with a membership of seventy-one.

We know nothing of his subsequent life, but may reasonably presume that he died in a good old age with the comfort that he had been a true and faithful minister of the Gospel.

For two years the Church remained without a pastor, during which the membership somewhat diminished. In 810 Elder Thomas Bunting was chosen pastor. He served two or three years, baptized some ten or fifteen persons, and at his resignation left the membership numbering sixty-six. Of Elder Bunting we have been unable to learn anything additional.

After undergoing another pastorless experience for a year or more, the Church secured the services of Elder Smith Sherwood.

He was born in Princess Anne County and was baptized into the fellowship of the London Bridge Church. Of him, Dr. T. G. Jones, in an obituary notice, says: "Possessed of a strong natural intellect, and by hard study, he attained to respectable scholarship, deep acquaintance with the Scriptures, and to considerable eminence as a

preacher." Of his latter days Hume says: "During the month of June, 1839, while on a tour of preaching, he was taken sick. Attempting to reach home, he only succeeded in reaching Portsmouth, and after an illness of twelve days, died, July 7, 1839, aged sixty years."

His descendants are still in the Church, thirteen of them now on the Church roll.

He was pastor of the Church for three years, baptized seventeen persons, and at the time of his resignation the Church membership was seventy-two.

The next in order of pastors was Stephen Woolford, another name lost in history. He served between 1819 and '20, and added four by baptism; but for reasons unknown the aggregate of membership fell off from seventy-two to fifty-four—a loss of twenty-eight.

It was not until 1821 that the Church again secured a pastor. At this time Elder David M. Woodson, a young man, native of Cumberland County, Va., who had been a year as State Missionary in North Carolina, was elected pastor. The Church was in a feeble spiritual state, and the assuming of the pastoral care by a young man of limited experience was a very solemn responsibility and an arduous undertaking. But Wood-

son was strong and vigorous, had enjoyed the advantages of theological training at Philadelphia and above all had the grace of God in his heart.

He had not long entered upon his work before God blessed his labors, and a great revival broke out resulting in the baptism of fifty persons. In a few years more a similar work of grace followed, and seventy-one others were baptized. Among those thus added are names that have ever since been among the most consecrated of the members of the Church; among them we may mention Catharine, James and Lemuel Williams, Frances Brooks, Martha Jarvis, Geo. Barrett, Rebecca Borum, Sarah Nash, Maria Godwin, Ann Higginbotham, Elizabeth Daughtrey, James Atkinson and many others, names still borne by a large number of the present members of the Church.

This great increase in the membership necessitated an enlargement of the meeting-house by the addition of a wing in the rear, making the general shape of the building that of a T, and we read in the records that a belfry was erected supplied with a bell, so that the Church, if opposed to now, then possessed this appendage.

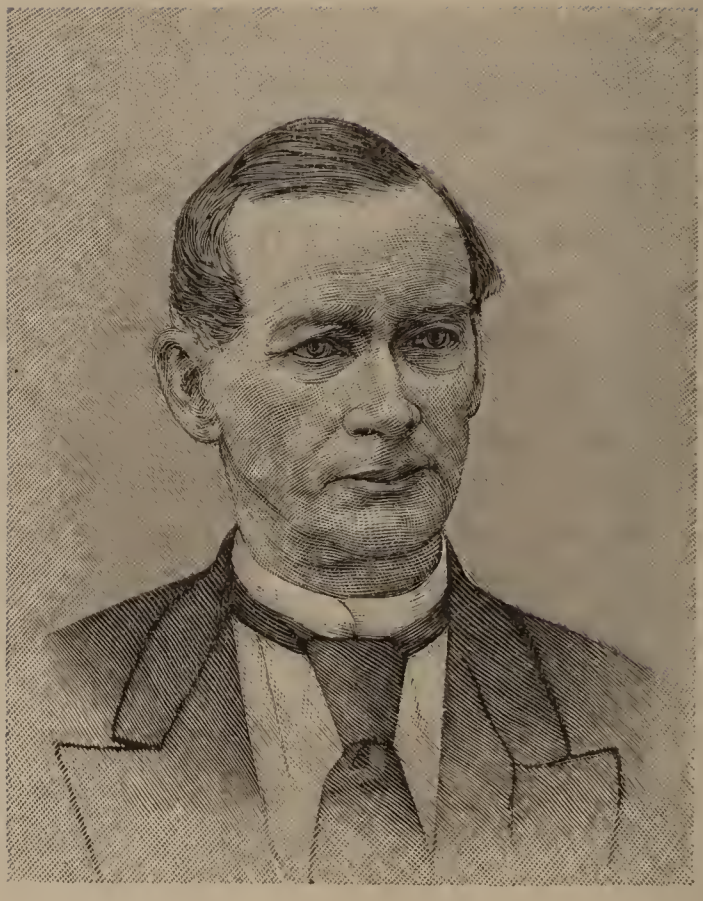
In May, 1824, the Church had the honor of

again entertaining the Portsmouth Association. The number of Churches had increased five, and the constituency had almost doubled itself, being 2540. Carr Bowers was the Moderator and Elder Smith Sherwood preached the Introductory sermon. The meeting was a very enthusiastic one, and many distinguished preachers were present, J. B. Jeter, Abner Clopton, A. M. Poindexter, and Wm. Hill Jordan, for whom no house was large enough to accommodate the crowds who flocked to hear him.

It was at this meeting that the Virginia Portsmouth Missionary Society agreed to disband, and the Association decided to co-operate with the General Association, which had been formed the year before.

Elder Woodson served the Church until September 18, 1832, a period of eleven years, during which time he had baptized 167, and the membership was increased from fifty-four to 234, an evidence both of the Divine favor and the uncommon ability of the pastor. During his last year, the terrible scourge of cholera prevailed and took off some very valuable members.

It would seem, however, that Elder Woodson did not devote all his time to this Church, for he was, during his pastorate here, also pastor of



Thomas Hume

Shoulder's Hill Church for three times, probably preaching there once a month of afternoons.

In an obituary notice of him we learn that "he was much esteemed in the community, and by his brethren generally, as an able and useful minister of the Gospel." After giving up the care of the Church in Portsmouth, he became a missionary in the Lower District of the Portsmouth Association, subsequently pastor of Shoulder's Hill and Suffolk Churches. For several years previous to his death he had suffered with a cancerous affection on his forehead, which required him nearly altogether to give up his preaching. The progress of this affection and the operations he underwent on account of it undermined his once vigorous and powerful constitution. He died in Nansemond County, Va., July 21, 1839, in the forty-third year of his age.

The Church remained without a pastor this time but six months, when, on the 29th of January, 1833, Elder Thomas Hume, Sr., was elected, entering formally upon his work March 17th following, the very day that marked the twenty-first anniversary of his birth. He was formally installed on the first Sunday in May—Elders John Kerr, of Richmond, John Goodall, of Hampton, and R. B. C. Howell, of Norfolk, taking part in

the services. Elder Hume continued as pastor until September 8, 1854, a period of twenty-one and a half years.

Of the brilliancy, success and far-reaching influence of this pastorate we can scarcely say too much.

The son of a Presbyterian minister, himself possessed of a superior education, obtained at the Baptist Seminary, now Richmond College, Elder Hume entered upon his work with advantage. He had preached for a short while in Chesterfield County, from which he was called here. It was a high compliment, and while in the minds of some there were misgivings as to the success of one so young, he did not fail to meet, but exceeded the most sanguine expectations. His ministry was a success from the start. Large and enthusiastic congregations attended on his preaching, and in two years the question of building a larger and more pretentious house of worship was agitated.

His success excited the envy of some of his cotemporaries in the other Churches, and he was led into a public correspondence through the newspapers on the question of baptism. They twitted him as being the "beardless youth," but he came out victorious, and a couplet was frequently quoted:

"While one was at home studying out his Greek
Hume took the converts down in the creek."

Elder Hume possessed, among his other qualifications, a fine business capacity, which left its influence upon every department of Church work. He reduced everything to system, and the Church records bear many marks of it. He was the first pastor to keep a complete and accurate list of members.

Being identified with many of the denominational enterprises, he lifted the Church into a state of sympathy with the same, and under his influence began that regular and systematic benevolence towards the missionary work of the denomination which it has ever since maintained. One of the oldest members of the Church recently said to the writer that "Court Street Church never knew anything about the work of the denomination until Hume became its pastor."

As already remarked, the spacious and beautiful house of worship now owned by the Church, and which has been so much admired by visitors, was built during his pastorate at a cost of $16,000.

It was first discussed in Church conference March 6, 1835, though not begun until June, 1838. The plan was drawn by William Forbes, a member of the Church, and the contractors

were William Forbes and William Brooks. The basement was occupied in the summer of 1839, and the main audience-room was formally dedicated and occupied in the summer of 1842, the dedicatory sermon being preached by E. L. Magoon, of Richmond. There was, however, one service in the main room before it was finished, which it is pleasant to record. It was the marriage of Miss Rebecca Schoolfield to Colonel D. G. Potts, and to do this a temporary floor had to be laid on the joists.

During Elder Hume's pastorate, May, 1847, the Portsmouth Association met for the fourth time with this Church. *Forty* churches and more than *eight* thousand members now composed the body. James C. Jordan was in the chair and Elder Hume was the clerk, a position he filled for thirty years. There were sixty-seven delegates present, and the leading topic of discussion was Foreign Missions, and the spacious room was packed with people on Saturday night to hear addresses from J. B. Jeter and C. B. Jennet. The influence of this meeting was long felt both on the Church and community.

Seeing that the city was rapidly growing, and that the Baptists must soon colonize, Elder Hume induced the Church to purchase the lot in New-

town in October, 1851, on which the Fount Street Church subsequently built a house of worship and organized a new Church.

During this pastorate several young men were sent out by the Church into the ministry, conspicuous among whom are Dr. Williams, of Baltimore, who is with us to-day, and Rev. James G. Councill, an influential pastor.

Under Elder Hume's ministry more than 800 were added to the Church by baptism, and over $3000 were given to various benevolent objects. There were five great revivals conducted, varying in results of additions from 35 to 116.

In the language of your present pastor, "We do not think we overstate the case when we say that the Baptists of this city owe more to Thomas Hume for their great success and high position than to any one man, living or dead. His smooth and tender eloquence won many of them to the Saviour; he buried them in baptism; he married their children and buried their dead. But those who loved him and admired him were not confined to his own Church Among the people of all religions and no religion he was esteemed and venerated."

About the time of his resignation, or very soon after, the scourge of yellow fever swept over the

city, cutting down hundreds of its inhabitants, not a few of whom were members of this Church. Elder Hume, then pastor of the Fourth Street Church, was in the city every day doing the work of a faithful pastor, going from house to house, administering comfort to the dying, burying the dead, sympathizing with the bereaved, and seeking employment and protection to the orphans—and God spared him from the scourge.

Born in Smithfield, Va., March 17, 1812, he died in Portsmouth, March 8, 1874, lacking only nine days of being sixty-three years of age. His mantle has fallen upon his son, Rev. Thomas Hume, Jr., D.D., the honored professor in Chapel Hill University, North Carolina.

On the 9th of March, 1855, the Church sent out her first colony. Letters of dismission were given to sixty white persons, seventeen males and forty-three females, for the purpose of organizing the Fourth Street Church, and a neat house of worship was built on the lot purchased by Elder Hume in 1851, which house is now being supplanted by a handsome brick one nearing completion.* Elder Hume took charge of the Church and remained as pastor for several years. The dismission of these

* The house is now complete, and is one of the most beautiful houses of worship in the State.

members, together with the loss in membership by the yellow fever, reduced the number on the register to five hundred and ninety-three.

The next in the list of pastors was Elder S. M. Carter, who acted as a supply for a short while. The prevalence of the yellow fever and its demoralizing effect upon the finances of the Church made it exceedingly difficult for the Church to secure a pastor. Calls were extended to several brethren, but they felt it their duty to decline. Elder Hume in the meantime very kindly filled the pulpit on Sunday afternoons, and the weekly prayer-meetings were kept up.

The suspense was finally broken, when, on August 1, 1856, Elder M. R. Watkinson, of New Jersey, assumed the care of the Church. His pastorate continued until April 23, 1861, when he went North, but his formal resignation was not made until August 1st, through a letter to the church, making his pastorate exactly five years.

Elder Watkinson entered upon the pastorate with every prospect of success and usefulness. The members rallied to his support and his preaching drew large and appreciative congregations. He was specially gifted in pastoral work, especially among the poorer members of the Church, whose homes were made bright by his

kind and devotional visits, and whose hearts were strengthened in the faith of the gospel. His labors in the pulpit were also highly blessed, adding to the Church 160 by baptism.

During his pastorate the Church contributed some $1200 to various benevolent objects, and a lot was bought by one of the members, brother Richard Cox, on the corner of Green and King Streets, and given to the colored members, upon which to erect a Church for themselves.

The lower part of the Church, which had, up to this time, been divided into two rooms, one of which was rented for day-school purposes, was thrown into one room and nicely fitted up for a Sunday-school and lecture-room at a cost of $2000. Besides the regular weekly prayer-meeting, one night in each week Elder Watkinson delivered a lecture on some Bible topic. These services were largely attended and resulted in great good to the Church

While thus moving on prosperously and having the love and confidence of the united Church and the community generally, the ever-memorable Civil War broke out. Elder Watkinson, while the subject of secession was in every mouth, preached a sermon taking strong secession grounds. It was a mooted question with

many, and the Church was divided; as a consequence, the sermon created a sensation and drew forth many criticisms, for and against. Soon afterwards, April 17, 1861, Virginia seceded. Elder Watkinson's family had gone North and communication was being fast cut off. It was thought that, having expressed his sentiments in the sermon, he would cast his lot with Virginia, but it was a trying hour with him, and when the last boat left that was to end all communication between the State and the North, April 23, 1861, he stepped on board and thus bade adieu to the Church and State. There were some who commended while others censured him for the step he took. It might have been very different had not his family been separated from him. As it was, and as a result of the heated passions occasioned by the impending Civil War, many hard things were said and many hard feelings engendered, which time has blotted from memory and hearts have repented of harboring. It is now conceded by the most extreme ones that in Elder M. R. Watkinson this Church enjoyed the ministrations and watchful care of one of its best pastors.

When the city fell into the hands of the Federal forces he was again tendered the pastoral care of the Church, but wisely declined.

He subsequently filled pastorates in New Jersey and Maryland. On a visit here soon after the war he aided the Fourth Street Church in a meeting and was tendered the pastoral care of that Church also, but declined. His health, which was for many years precarious, soon failed, and on September 28, 1877, in the city of Baltimore, he died and was buried in the cemetery of the Baptist Church in Pemberton, N. J.

In the records of the Court Street Church a page has been devoted to his memory suitably inscribed.

The Civil War was now in full blast—the Church could find no one to succeed to the pastorate. The pulpit, however, was supplied until February 28, 1862, by Elders T. Hume, Jr., Jos. F. Deans and C. E. W. Dobbs, when Elder I. B. Lake was called. He served, however, only a month, owing to the evacuation of the city by the Confederate forces, May 10, 1862, and being unwilling to remain in Federal lines.

For about a year the Church was without a pastor. In April, 1863, Elder C. E. W. Dobbs, a licentiate of the Church and who had spent two sessions at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, acted as a supply. Of this pastorate, he says:

"The pastor, Rev. M. R. Watkinson, had left

on the last Federal steamer and Rev. Jos. F. Deans and myself preached for the Church alternately (by the invitation from the deacons) from time to time until the evacuation of the city. After that I continued to supply the pulpit alone. My plan was to preach for the white brethren at 11 o'clock and for the colored people in the basement at 4 P.M. This continued until the summer of 1863, when I gave up the appointment for the colored people, they becoming restless and having made complaint to the military authorities that they were denied their rights in the Church, that they were in the majority and desired to call a loyal minister as pastor.

"Up to this time I had been preaching without any formal agreement. On September 20, 1863, I was formally elected pastor. The Church offered me no salary, and indeed, I received nothing for my services during the entire time I supplied the Church, except a generous gift of books from brother Jas. T. Borum and a $20 Confederate (Virginia) note from sister Binford. On March 6, 1864, I was ordained to the full work of the ministry, and in two days afterwards I was arrested and imprisoned in Camp Hamilton, near Fortress Monroe, on an order from General B. F. Butler. He told me that frequent complaints

had been made against me as a rebel preacher, and that the colored members had corroborated these things. I do not believe my arrest was because of my preaching, but because of a business rivalry between two newspapers, in one of which I was interested, and the other conducted by a member of General Butler's staff."

The matter of interference on the part of the colored people referred to above, grew out of their minds being poisoned by political partisans. They laid their grievances before the Provost Marshal, who summoned the officers of the Church before him. On hearing the true state of affairs, and seeing it was solely a religious question, he decided to have no jurisdiction in the matter and left it to the Church to adjust.

As a matter of history it should be stated that the Church had always given special attention to the spiritual instruction of its colored members. There were regularly appointed two of the best brethren to conduct services for them. They were given the use of the basement of the Church for meetings early Sunday mornings and afternoons, and one of the galleries in the main audience-room was also set apart for their use. Just before the breaking out of the war, a movement was begun, looking for the erection of a

meeting-house for their especial use, and after the war this movement culminated in the erection of the Church on the lot given by one of the members of the church already referred to above.

Elder Dobbs was liberated August 12, 1864. He did not preach at the Court Street Church again until after the war, but did fill the pulpit of the Fourth Street Church during the year 1865. He is at present the popular pastor of the First Baptist Church of Columbus, Miss., and has for several years worn with honor the title of Doctor of Divinity. His eldest son is now a student for the ministry at our Theological Seminary.

Soon after the arrest of Elder Dobbs the Church edifice fell into the hands of the Federal authorities, who converted the upper room into a military hospital, and continued to use it until December 15, 1864. About this time Elder S. B. Gregory, a missionary of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, was sent here and took charge of the Church. Elder Dobbs says: "He was very kind in his expressions to me and assured me that he was trying to secure enough from the United States Government to put the house in good condition, when he intended to turn it over to the white brethren."

At first, Elder Gregory's coming was not ac-

ceptable to the Church, because the Church had no voice in the choice, but he proved himself to be a good and true man, and the brethren, upon reflection, saw that it was best for the Church at large that he came as he did, and on January 6, 1865, by formal action in conference recognized Elder Gregory as the acting pastor of the Church. He succeeded in securing the upper room of the Church, and had it repaired at the expense of the government, kept the membership together, received several by baptism and letter, and thus rendered most valuable aid to the Church. His labors closed in May, 1865, having been pastor about six months.

On February 10, 1865, upon their own request, the colored members were formally given letters of dismission for the purpose of forming a separate Church, known as the Zion Baptist Church. Elder E. G. Corfrew became their pastor, and remained as such to the close of his life.

The next pastor of the Church was Elder J. Lipscomb Johnson, who entered upon his duties October 1, 1865. The Church was considerably divided politically, but gave the pastor their support, and he did a good work. In the spring of 1866 a revival of religion came over the Church, and more than fifty were added to the member-

ship, and the white membership of the Church reached 419.

He inaugurated a series of lectures by eminent divines, and some $200 were raised as a nucleus fund for the erection of a baptistery. Elder Johnson closed his ministry with this Church September 1, 1867, occasioned by the inability of the Church to give him adequate financial support—one effect of the late war.

During his pastorate two young men were recognized as having been called of God to the ministry—Jos. S. Anderson and the writer of this paper.

For three months the Church was again without a pastor. Several were called, but with no success, until December 1, 1867, when Elder Harvey Hatcher consented to serve in that capacity, and remained as pastor until March 1, 1870—two years and three months. He did much to bring about a reconciliation between the political factions in the Church. Forty-one were added by baptism. The baptistery was built at a cost of $1225, and it is remarkable to state that the first persons baptized in its waters were Pedobaptists, one a Presbyterian and the other a Methodist. Elder Hatcher subsequently served pastorates in Missouri and elsewhere, and is at present the

manager of a branch house of the American Baptist Publication Society in Atlanta, Ga.

As already referred to, the Church was still suffering from the debilitating effects of the war. Several things had occurred to awaken bitter political feelings among some of the members, and a pastor who sided with either wing was necessarily unpopular with the other. In view of this, a compromise was thought to have been made when, on May 1, 1870, Elder C. Wilson Smith, an Englishman, who had been but a short time in this country, was chosen pastor. It was thought in him, a stranger, all political elements could meet. But his methods were in many respects very peculiar, and, while he was sincere in them, he never succeeded in rallying the membership around him. Dissatisfaction soon displayed itself, and a strong element was opposed to the pastor. At first Elder Smith was not disposed to heed these tokens of dissatisfaction, but persistently held on until it was ascertained in an election for pastor that out of a ballot of eighty-two votes only twenty-seven were in his favor. He resigned July 16, 1871. He is now living in Pennsylvania, and is pastor of the church at St. Clair.

Finding that instead of healing all internal differences in the selection of Elder Smith as pas-

tor it had introduced others in addition, the Church was deeply grieved, and, seeing that God could not and would not bless them in such a state, resolved to bury the past and let no political differences exist in the Church again. In this respect Elder Smith's pastorate was a blessing to the Church, and paved the way for the Church to be in a far better condition for its next pastor than it had been for several years past.

After praying and waiting for about six months, on the 1st of December, 1871, Elder A. E. Owen became pastor, which position he still holds, covering a period of nearly eighteen years, the longest pastorate, save that of Elder Hume.

His presence among us checks us from saying many things complimentary of him, but, as we are making history, facts are facts, and need to be recorded.

The Church very soon recognized Elder Owen's ability as a preacher and pastor, and gave him their hearty support, and he has had the honor of raising the Church to a plane of usefulness and influence far exceeding any other period in her history, and in evidence of this appreciation she has more than once raised his salary, and cared for his comfort in many other ways. Under his ministry the Church has enjoyed ten gracious re-

vivals, in which the pastor was aided by Elders J. Wm. Jones, C. Tyree, J. E. Hutson (twice), M. S. Read, F. M. Jordan, A. G. McManaway, Julian M. Luck, A. B. Dunaway and H. M. Wharton. The most conspicuous of these were those held in 1880 by J. E. Hutson, where 140 persons professed faith in Christ, and 80 were added to this Church. In 1886 the meeting conducted by J. M. Luck resulted in a great awakening of the spirituality of the Church, and some of the best members of the Church came in. But the greatest meeting of all was that held in the early part of this year, conducted by H. M. Wharton. Its power was felt all over the city, and for fifteen days and nights great throngs eagerly sought to hear him, and in response to his appeals very many gave themselves to the Saviour. Of the fruits of this meeting all churches shared, and to this Church eighty-eight additions were made.

During Elder Owen's pastorate four young men have been led into the ministry: E. B. Morris, C. A. G. Thomas, W. P. Hines and Jno. W. Dougherty.

In 1878 the Church entertained the General Association of Virginia, composed of 333 delegates—the largest for years—in a very handsome

manner, meeting all its expenses and with a balance in the treasury.

In 1881 the main audience-room of the church was thoroughly repaired and improvements made at a cost of $3286.90. The Church, through aid rendered by a legacy of James Carney, bought the property on the corner of Court and London Streets for a parsonage, for which $3250 was paid. In 1883 the Scott's Creek Chapel was erected for the benefit of members of the Church residing in that vicinity, and cost $1500. A Sunday-school has been maintained there ever since and occasional preaching, from the fruits of which the Church has received valuable additions to its membership.*

For several years the question of establishing a mission in the south-western part of the city was discussed, and during the present year a neat brick building has been put up at a cost of $4500, including the lot. It was dedicated July 21, and a flourishing Sunday-school of over 100 scholars is maintained. At this place and the Scott's Creek Chapel Elder John W. Dougherty, the youngest of the licentiates sent out by this

* On to-morrow night, September 9th, they will be constituted into a regular Church and begin their career with a membership of eighty-six.

Church, preaches regularly, and there are already manifest marks of the Divine favor upon his labors.

In addition to these things a chapel has this year been added to the Church on Queen Street, to accommodate the increased growth of the Sunday-school. It is one of the handsomest Sunday-school rooms in the State, and is both an ornament to the city and a monument to the zeal and liberality of the Church. The cost of this building and lot is about $9500.

These achievements are enough to grace any man's pastorate and will ever stand as monuments to pastor and people—to the faithful ministry of the one and the generous liberality of the other.

Nor has the Church confined her liberality to home purposes. She has ever lent a listening ear to brethren who have appealed to her for aid in erecting houses of worship elsewhere, and none have gone away empty-handed. In addition still, during the present pastor's charge of the Church there have been contributed $7126.12 to the various benevolent objects of the denomination—a record that needs no comment at our hands.

During his stay Elder Owen has baptized 643 into the fellowship of the Church and the membership has increased from 308 to 472, not taking

into account the two colonies sent out, and the pastor, we may say in conclusion, together with all the honor due him for such a glorious record in his ministry here, has another in which he stands alone, viz.: he is the first and only pastor the Church ever had upon whom his brethren have conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity —an honor he wears with becoming modesty and appreciation, and his Church shares it with him.

In preparing this sketch many facts of importance and interest have been necessarily omitted in passing, which, however, deserve to be mentioned as matters of history, and we have reserved them for this paragraph. The subject of church music has been one of interesting and gradual development. As early as November 5, 1835, we find that Brother William Forbes was appointed to line out the hymns and lead in the singing, and in case of a failure on his part Brother F. Garrison was to take it up. This was the first beginning of organized singing in the Church. It worked well, for in the very next year, February 12, 1836, the choir was formed and granted the exclusive use of the two front benches. In 1836 the "Virginia Selection of Hymns" was adopted. In 1839 permission was asked for to put book-racks on the backs of the pews occupied by the choir

—singing by note, you see. In 1841 the choir, increasing in number, asks for a third bench for their use. The choir was then led by a flute in the hands of the leader, and forty-eight voices sang in unison to its pitch. In 1847 the pastor was allowed to organize a choir for the gallery in front of the pulpit in the new Church, and John F. C. Potts was elected the leader. In 1853 the Baptist Psalmody was adopted. January, 1857, Mr. John Clark was, after some discussion as to the propriety, allowed to place his melodeon in the Church for the use of the choir. The same year the Church appointed a committee to secure a competent instructor for the choir. The year following one of the members of the Church paid the tuition of a young lady studying music so as to fit herself for becoming Church organist. In 1858 the Church purchased a pipe-organ for $425, and in 1883 substituted another and better instrument, costing over $1000, which still is in service.

At times the singing has given the Church some trouble, not because there were no good voices in the Church, but because, there being so many, it was difficult to select some without slighting others.

In 1831, and earlier, parcels of land, enough

for a single grave, were sold in rear of the Church for burial purposes.

In 1833 there were three Sunday-schools in connection with the Church, the aggregate number of scholars being 380.

In 1834 a general temperance movement swept over the country, and nearly every member of this Church was enrolled as a member. John B. Gough spoke on several occasions in the Church.

On April 3, 1838, Thomas C. Godwin, the father of our brother, T. W. Godwin, of Norfolk, met with a sudden and distressing death, occasioned by the falling of the wall of a house, which stood where Maupin's Hall now stands. He was an officer in the Church and was universally loved by all who knew him. Elder Hume says of his funeral: "At his grave many eyes wept that never wept before."

We cannot close this paper without emphasizing the fact that this last year of the Church's history has in many respects been the best of all the hundred. The simple narration of the facts is eloquent.

Built the South Street Chapel at a cost of $4500, organized a Church there with fifty-five members and furnished them a preacher, Bro. Jno. W. Daugherty, who has just been ordained.

Enjoyed perhaps the best revival of religion the Church ever experienced, more than eighty being added to the Church. Erected a handsome, commodious and durable Sunday-school room at a cost of $9,500. Contributed to benevolent and charitable objects $785.92.

Not yet satisfied, to-morrow the second colony will be organized into a Church at Scotsville with a membership of seventy-eight.

What a noble ending to the first century of her history! What a rich legacy she hands down to posterity! And now, dear brethren and friends, you who have so patiently followed me through this paper, my task is about done.

Brethren, such has been the earthly record of the Church; the record on high cannot yet be known. There are some few before me whose memory goes back over much that I have said, and a tear of joy has now and then been wiped from your eyes. *You* have no reason to regret, dear brethren, that your lot has been cast here. As you soon must cross over the river and receive your reward, let your heart be cheered now at what your Church has done, and be proud that you too have borne a part in this accomplishment.

Young brethren, and the majority now are young, the future history of the Church will be

what you make it. You have a rich legacy entrusted to you; the veterans who give it to you are only waiting for their summons to "come up higher," and then you must go alone. Stand by the old mother, cheer her with your strength, comfort her with your prayers; provide for her with your means, and as she enters upon another centennial let her feel that her youth has returned and that with God's blessing she has yet a higher and nobler mission before her, and when she sends forth her annual reports to the gatherings of God's people and tells them what she has done, let each one of you be able to say, "in that result I bear a part," and then when you lay your armor down, the Master will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

LIST OF BRETHREN WHO HAVE SERVED AS DEACONS.

Michael King,
——— Shepherd,
——— Burke,
William Drury,
George Barrett,
James Williams,
William Brooks,
Thomas C. Godwin,
William B. Forbes,
Moss W. Armistead,
William H. Morris,
John D. Cooper,
John C. Kaufman,
William F. Higginbotham,
James A. Davis,
William P. Guy,
J. A. Tabb,
Wm. D. Robertson,
Thomas J. Rudd,
T. F. Deans,
Charles E. Jenkins,
E. C. Brooks,
James T. Borum,
Robert H. Barrett,
Benjamin F. Culpeper,
R. A. Hutchins,
Geo. W. King.

CHURCH CLERKS.*

1. William Forbes, from Jan. 8, 1830, to Feb. 10, 1837.
2. Jno. F. C. Potts, from Feb. 10, 1837, to May 8, 1840.
3. Jno. D. Cooper, from May 8, 1840, to Oct. 16, 1840.
4. Wm. Gleason, from Oct. 16, 1840, to Nov. 13, 1850.
5. A. M. Tabb, from Nov. 13, 1850, to Oct. 10, 1853.
6. Saml. J. Staples, from Oct. 10, 1853, to Sept. 8, 1854.
7. Jas. T. Borum, from Sept. 8, 1854, to Jan. 12, 1866.
8. Geo. M. Turner, from Jan. 12, 1866, to Dec. 7, 1866.
9. F. R. Benson, from Dec. 7, 1866, to Jan. 10, 1868.
10. C. S. Sherwood, from Jan. 10, 1868, to Jan. 6, 1871.
11. Jesse T. Morris, from Jan. 6, 1871, to Jan. 12, 1872.
12. Geo. M. Turner, from Jan. 12, 1872, to June 12, 1874.
13. E. C. Godwin, from June 12, 1874, to Nov. 12, 1875.
14. Jno. W. Dougherty, from Nov. 12, 1875, to Jan. 10, 1879.
15. D. A. Williams, from Jan. 10, 1879, to date.

HISTORICAL TABLE, STATISTICS, ETC.

No.	Pastors.	Duration of Pastorate.	Baptisms.	Members at Time of Resignation.	Contributions to All Objects.
I.	Thos. Armistead .	1789–1794	100	113	. . . .
II.	Thos. Etheridge .	1796	. .	. .	. . . .
III.	Jacob Grigg . . .	1797	. .	. .	. . . .
IV.	Davis Briggs . . .	1799–1808	100	71	£4 10*s.*
V.	Thos. Bunting . .	1810–1812	15	66	$5.50
VI.	Smith Sherwood .	1815–1818	17	72	8.00
VII.	Stephen Woolford .	1819–1820	4	54	5.00
VIII.	D. M. Woodson . .	1821–1832	167	234	43.00
IX.	Thomas Hume . .	May, 1832–Sept., 1854	800	678	2,952.96
X.	S. M. Carter . . .	Oct., 1854–July, 1856	5	593	184.00
XI.	M. R. Watkinson .	Aug., 1856–Aug., 1861	160	497	1,221.02
XII.	C. E. W. Dobbs . .	Sept., 1863–Mar., 1864	. .	. .	. . . .
XIII.	S. B. Gregory . . .	Dec., 1864–May, 1865	9	550	. . . .
XIV.	J. L. Johnson . . .	Oct., 1865–Sept., 1867	49	419†	. . . .
XV.	Harvey Hatcher . .	Dec., 1867–Mar., 1870	41	338	571.13
XVI.	C. Wilson Smith . .	May, 1870–July, 1871	. .	306	186.71
XVII.	A. E. Owen . . .	Dec. 1, 1871, to date	643	472	52,838.87

* The existing Church Records do not go back further than 1830.

† These are all whites, the colored members having withdrawn.

The statistics above have been taken from the minutes of the Portsmouth Association. The pastorates of Elders Dobbs, Gregory and Johnson embrace the war period, and either no meeting of the Association was held or very imperfect reports were made.

AN ADDRESS

ON THE PREACHERS WHO HAVE GONE OUT FROM THE CHURCH.

BY REV. JOHN W. M. WILLIAMS, D.D.

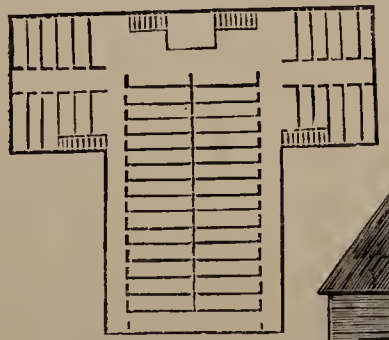
Of Baltimore, Md.

MINISTERS WHO WERE ONCE MEMBERS OF THIS CHURCH.

I AM becoming quite familiar with centennial service. A few years ago we observed the centennial of the First Church in Baltimore. We have a young lady in our church who celebrated her one hundredth birthday last March. And here I am taking part in the centennial services of my mother church. I am glad to be here. Have been charmed with all the exercises so far. The subject assigned me is, *Ministers who were once members of this church.*

We read in 1 Kings 6: 7, "And the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron in the house, while it was in building." The arch-

THE OLD CHURCH, ERECTED in 1800



GROUND PLAN

itect of that house knew from the beginning what it was to be. He had his working plan, and the workmen built according to its specifications. Every stone in it was made ready before it was brought to the building and fitted into its proper place, so the house went up without the sound of hammer, or axe, or any tool of iron. There was no guess work either as to the proportions of the house or the place each stone was to fill in it.

The workmen went to the quarry of nature and took the stones as they found them, and prepared them for the places designed for them according to the specifications.

Many of these stones at first little resembled the places they were to fill. But by patient, skillful workmanship they were prepared, and fitted exactly the place for which they were designed.

Many of them were, no doubt, rough, unshapely, ugly and unpromising when first taken from the quarry. But they found their proper place in the building.

In the erection of God's spiritual house it is not a matter of conjecture as to what it is to be. The Great Architect saw from the beginning what it was to be, the material of which it was to be composed, and especially the character of the chief workmen.

God goes to the quarry of humanity to find them, and many of them are rough and unpromising in the beginning. But the Great Architect finds a place for them.

All along the ages it has been true that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things and things despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are."

I am here to-day to speak of the stones God has selected from the quarry of humanity in the Court Street Church, of Portsmouth, Va., in His spiritual house, or the ministers of the gospel who were once members of this church during the last hundred years.

About fifty years ago a sprightly but wayward youth in Old England ran away from his native home. He shipped for America, and continued for many years to follow the sea. His parents were members of the Church of England, and he was reared in that faith. He was fond of reading. Books being scarce on ship-board, he was forced to read his Bible. He committed nearly the whole

of the Bible to memory, which proved a great blessing to him in future life. He was a good sailor. Energetic and faithful, he commanded the respect of all.

While in the harbor of New York, he attended services at the Seamen's Bethel. The truth reached his heart; he was brought to see his need of a Saviour. He was converted and joined the Episcopal Church.

From this time the Bible was more precious than ever to him. He read it with new eyes and new desires, because he had a new heart. He read it looking for the footsteps of Jesus, desiring to walk in them. Several portions of it gave him much trouble. Among the rest the third chapter of Matthew. Jesus baptized by John, going down into the water and coming up out of the water; what could it mean? He had never seen the ordinance of baptism administered in that way. He had not followed in the footsteps of Jesus in that direction.

The second chapter of Acts also arrested his attention, where he read, "And they that gladly received his word were baptized," and other passages which invariably connected baptism with faith; also Romans, sixth chapter: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death."

He asked himself again and again, What does all this mean? He knew nothing of the Baptist denomination; had no idea there was such a people in the world who baptized none but professed believers, and baptized such only by burying them in the water. He was in great trouble, but God had a place for him in His temple and His own way of preparing him for it and bringing him to it.

When Jonah was flying from duty God sent a storm and a big fish to arrest him and bring him back to the work from which he was fleeing. Unlike Jonah, this young man knew his duty and was going to do it, but did not know how to discharge it.

God sent a storm to put him in the way to do the will of the Lord more perfectly. His ship was wrecked on your coast, near Cape Henry. The officers and crew were saved and brought into this port. While here, he attended this Church, heard its pastor, Rev. Thomas Hume, preach, and saw him baptize believers—at swimming-point—where so many of us put on Christ in baptism. The way was clear before him now. He made haste and delayed not. He conferred with the pastor, presented himself to the Church, related his Christian experience and told the dealings of the Lord with him almost exactly as I

have just given it to you. He was baptized by Brother Hume in 1840, and united with this Church.

He abandoned the sea, and went to the Valley of Virginia, where he taught school for several years. But the school-room was not the place God designed him to fill. His heart was fired with zeal to save souls. He occasionally spoke in meeting and led in prayer.

The people soon discovered that the root of the matter was in him, and that he was called of God to preach the gospel. He was licensed to preach.

He labored as a missionary in that region for two years. Then for three years as General Agent of the Association of Virginia. Then for about two years as Agent of the Home Board of the S. B. Convention.

During these years, as he went about among the Churches, he drew large congregations, aroused the Churches and was the instrument in the hand of God of saving many.

In 1849 he unwisely consented to accept the pastorate of a city Church—the First Church of Petersburg.

I say *unwisely*, because he was not adapted to that kind of work. A pastorate required more study, more close application, more concentration of effort, more arduous labor than he had the

ability or inclination to give. As another has said, "A city charge was too small a sphere for him. He longed to dash out into the wide world, to labor among the churches at large." The Churches were constantly calling him to help them in protracted meetings, and he was always ready and willing to help. The result was that he spent but little time with his own people. Two years satisfied him and his Church that he was neither a born or a made pastor.

The rest of his life was given wholly to itinerating and holding protracted meetings. He was what we call at this day an Evangelist, and a most excellent and successful one. The Lord blessed him wherever he went. His preaching was so eminently evangelical, his spirit so kind, his bearing so gentlemanly in the pulpit and out of it that he won all hearts, and was eminently qualified by nature and grace to do the work of an Evangelist. His labors were greatly blessed in Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland. I had him with me in two protracted meetings, once in Lynchburg and once in Baltimore, and can testify from personal experience to these things. I have many pleasant reminiscences of him which might interest you, but I will not consume time to mention them.

It was a long-cherished idea with him to visit his native land and to testify for Jesus among his kindred and countrymen. In 1853 he carried out this long-cherished desire and sailed for England, spent several months there in social intercourse and in religious meetings; preaching the gospel he so much loved.

On his return voyage his steamer—the "City of Glasgow"—went to the bottom, and nothing was ever heard of her. All on board found a watery grave. The older members of this congregation will recognize in this picture the likeness of the beloved J. L. Reynoldson, one of the ministers that went out from this Church.

Many great and useful men in Church and State began their career in a printing-office. The handling of letters made them literary in more senses than one. The manipulation of type made them typical men. Putting up other men's ideas stirred up their own ideas. Once there was a Portsmouth boy, born and reared in your midst, who became a practical printer. That boy had *brain*, and when God gave him grace it was made evident that He had some other place for him than the compositors' office. We heard this morning from an ex-superintendent of this school the trouble this boy gave his teacher by his sceptical and inquiring

mind. The Church was not long in discovering his gifts and graces, and they licensed him to preach the gospel.

In 1863, during the time that tried men's souls in all this South land, especially in this city, after it was evacuated by the Confederate forces and was under martial law, the Church called him to be its pastor. He served them until he went to Kentucky. The history of his going to that State may interest you, and not be out of place in an address on those sent into the ministry by this Church.

During the war our missionaries in China and Africa were cut off from our Foreign Mission Board in Richmond. The Baptist Churches in Baltimore considered themselves the Southern Baptist Convention for the time being, and determined to do all they could to meet the necessities of our missions. We organized a Board of Foreign Missions and had what we called meetings of S. B. Convention each year during the War. Hiram Woods was chosen Chairman of the Board; Wm. Crane was Treasurer, and the pastor of the First Church Corresponding Secretary. Dr. Fuller presided at our annual meetings. The Corresponding Secretary kept up a regular correspondence with our mission and discharged the usual duties of corresponding secretary without any pecuniary com-

pensation. We were cut off from every State connected with the S. B. Convention. We did the very best we could in raising funds, and I assure you there were many large and noble contributions made in those trying days by the Baptists of Baltimore.

Immediately after the surrender, in the month of May Kentucky was opened to us, and the Corresponding Secretary hastened there to attend the meeting of its General Association held in Covington. He received a most cordial welcome. It was the first opportunity they had had to ventilate their Southern feelings, and they welcomed most heartily the representative of the Southern Baptist Convention. He made one address, took up a collection of $1800 and hastened back to Baltimore so as to send the money as soon as possible to our suffering missionaries. Seeing the sympathy of the Baptists there with our work and their readiness to give, and knowing the needs of our missions, the Corresponding Secretary decided to abandon his usual summer vacation and spend the month of August in visiting the Churches and district associations in the interest of Foreign Missions.

During this visit he learned how much the Churches in Kentucky needed efficient pastors, and

how anxious they were to secure them. He there met for the first time his dear friend Dr. Helm, the leading spirit among the ministers of Kentucky. He mentioned the name of this preaching printer here in Portsmouth to Dr. Helm, and suggested that he should influence some Church to invite him to visit them.

On his return to Baltimore he wrote to this young man, telling him what he had done, and urging him, if any Church in Kentucky invited him to visit them, to go; and if any Church called him, to accept, saying to him: Go to Kentucky if the way is open, for as long as you stay in Portsmouth you will be nothing but Charlie Dobbs, but if you go to Kentucky you will be Mr. Dobbs, and, it may be, Dr. Dobbs.

The way was opened. He went, he saw and he was captured; and, sure enough, he is to-day Dr. C. E. W. Dobbs. He served several Churches efficiently in that State, then he went to Indiana, where he was pastor of a Church and editor of a religious paper. He is now the popular pastor of the Baptist Church in Columbus, Miss.

He was elected secretary of the General Association of Kentucky many years in succession, and served the Southern Baptist Convention in that capacity several terms. Professor Rust said of

him: "He was a recording secretary by nature, and must have been born with a quill behind his ear."

He has been a close student and a voluminous writer in our weekly and quarterly papers. I have read many of his articles with pleasure, profit and surprise at his scholarship and mature thought.

The Lord blessed him with an excellent wife, whose father, Geo. Barrett, was one of the best members this Church ever had. One of Dr. Dobbs' sons has recently graduated at our Theological Seminary, and, I am told, is a fine student and an excellent preacher. Neither this church nor this town need be ashamed of *Charlie*, now Dr. C. E. W. Dobbs.

A minister once had two sons. When they were quite young, the father said one of them had a taste for literature, and the other for business, and he determined that he would make a literary man of one and a business man of the other. The sequel proved that he was correct in his judgment. For one of them was a successful merchant in this city to the day of his death. The other gave himself to literature, and is to-day as well qualified, I presume, intellectually, to fill the chair of English literature as any man in America. He has taught in several institutions of high

order, and is at present professor in the University, North Carolina.

Though he has never given himself wholly to the work of the ministry—always connecting teaching with preaching—yet he has served several churches with acceptance. Among the rest, the Cumberland Street Church, Norfolk, where he succeeded his father.

At a very early age he had logical and serious thoughts on the subject of religion. On one occasion he submitted to his little brothers the question, "What is the best thing in the world?" One said one thing, and one, another. But "Tom" said with emphasis: "That the best thing in the world was heavenly cake and wine, for when they handed them around in Church everybody took some." But he added: "I think they are real mean, for they will not give me a bit."

There we have religion, logic and human nature equally blended. You will recognize in this picture the likeness of Rev. Thomas Hume, D.D.

Rev. J. G. Council, once a member of this Church, sends me the following concise history of himself: "In the world sixty-seven years; in Christ forty-eight years; in the ministry forty-two years."

This brother pursued a course of three years'

study in Richmond College and two at Columbian College, Washington, D. C. He commenced his labors under the supervision of the executive committee of the lower district of the Portsmouth Association as missionary in Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties.

After a year he succeeded Rev. Jeremiah Hendren as pastor of Kempsville Church. He was pastor six years in connection with that Church, and organized during that time the Churches at Mulberry and Lake Drummond.

He was pastor for six years of the Red Bank and Lower Northampton Churches on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, where his labors were blessed.

In 1861, about the beginning of the war, he was called to the first and only Baptist Church in Matthews County, Va. He continued there, with one other Church that he organized, for eight years. He then succeeded Rev. O. F. Flippo at Pocomoke City, Md. He remained there only two years—years of affliction, sickness and death.

It was there he lost his most excellent and exemplary wife—a real helpmeet. I knew her well, and am quite sure he might have said in truth: "By the grace of God and Sarah Ann White I am what I am."

At the same time he lost one of his children,

while two others were near unto death with the typhoid fever.

We must not wonder that, under these painful circumstances, he was willing to accept a call to Newington and Ebenezer Churches in Gloucester County.

He remained with these Churches about eight years, when he was recalled to Kempsville, the place of his second pastorate in connection with London Bridge Church, where he remained three years.

He went from Kempsville to Front Royal, Warren County, Va., and then to Roanoke County, where he is now serving four Churches with Hollins' Institute. This brother supposes he has baptized 700 converts. He has not lived in vain, nor should this Church be ashamed of his record.

It is said that facts are stubborn things. But it does not follow that a man of facts is a stubborn fellow. But it does follow that a man of reliable facts is a blessed and good article to have among us. Such a man is making history and preserving what might otherwise be lost. He is bringing the present generation under obligations to him. And children not yet born will rise up and call Geo. J. Hobday blessed.

One who knows him well and appreciates him

greatly writes me, "Hobday is a fine scholar and a great genius, in regard to doing things." That's the kind of men we need in this practical age—men of genius in doing, not promising, but doing things. It may be said of him, as is said of Sir Robt. Wren, the architect of great St. Paul, in London, "If you would see his monument look around you." If you would know what Hobday has done, is doing and what you may expect him to do, just look around you, for he is yet in your midst, a live man of facts and deeds. This brother was educated at Richmond College and our Southern Theological Seminary. Ordained 1871. May his shadow never grow less. Henry Petty, a useful preacher and popular writer, was once a member of this Church.

Ed. B. Morris, another Portsmouth boy and S. S. scholar, was baptized by your present pastor, educated at Richmond College and Crozer Theological Seminary, and ordained in 1878. He was several years pastor of the Baptist Church at Waverly, now a portion of Baltimore. He is at present in Millville, New Jersey. With a strong and healthy body, an educated mind, a consecrated heart, and an intelligent and pious wife, he has been useful and promises to be more so.

Chas. A. G. Thomas was baptized by brother

Owen, studied some years at Richmond College, and one or two sessions at our Theological Seminary at Louisville. He was licensed to preach by this Church in 1878. He supplied the Baptist Church in Nanjemoy, Md., one vacation with great acceptance while he was a student.

Raleigh and Eagle Rock, N. C., was a joint pastorate which he served a few years. The same was true of Yanceyville and Ashland, N. C. He made his field of labor in Yanceyville and Wake County, and had charge of a Mission in Washington, N. C., four months. He is now at Elizabeth City, N. C., where his earnest preaching and faithful pastoral work are highly appreciated by the people and blessed by the Lord.

Rev. Walter P. Hines, a native of Isle of Wight County, was baptized by Rev. Jos. T. Deans, joined this Church by letter and was ordained in this house November, 1885. He did good service in Surry County, where he built two houses of worship and organized two Churches in two years. Was pastor at Kempsville and Salem Churches for one year. Is now pastor at Atlantic City, near Norfolk, where the work of the Lord prospers in his hands.

The history of Jos. S. Anderson, once a member of this Church, is short and sad. In 1868 he

was received as a student for the ministry at Richmond College. A very promising young man. Was at College eighteen months and died of consumption before he ever preached.

I quote from another the following: "Theodore Knapp went from this Church. Was educated at Richmond College. Lived and preached in North Carolina for many years. Went to Pennsylvania and some said he had the title of D.D. conferred upon him. This I always doubted. He went to Colorado and joined the Episcopalians. "Requiescat in pace." Rev. E. G. Cosprew (colored) was once a member of this Church and for many years a leader among his people.

Rev. J. D. Rayfield while a teacher in a public school in Annapolis, Md., organized a Sunday-school in Eastport, a growing village opposite Annapolis. He occasionally preached to the people. The Franklin Square Church, Baltimore, of which he was a member, sympathized with him, and took the mission under their care. During the present year a comfortable and inviting house of worship has been erected and paid for. A Church has been organized and brother Rayfield has been ordained its pastor. He has given himself wholly to the work of the ministry, and the Lord is greatly blessing his labors there.

He is highly esteemed by his brethren in Baltimore.

Rev. John W. Daugerty was baptized by your present pastor and licensed to preach last January. He superintended two missions connected with this Church with such ability and success that the Church called for his ordination during the past week, when he was set apart to the work of the ministry.

The following brethren were licensed by the Church, but never ordained: James Weaver, in 1843; Edward Dunn, in 1845; Richard Allen, in 1848, and William Higginbotham. This brother was senior deacon of the Church. He was faithful unto death, and went to his reward last March.

We have noticed the names of those once members of this Church who were licensed and ordained to preach the gospel. There is one name I am surprised not to find in either list. There must be a mistake somewhere; either that man did a great deal of preaching without being licensed by the Church or he was licensed and no record made of it, or in some way the record has been lost or overlooked. I refer to Deacon George Barrett. He was one of the most powerful men in prayer I ever listened to. He frequently reminded us of Job when he said: "Oh

that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat, I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Brother Barrett often found Him, and came even unto His seat, and ordered his cause before Him, and filled his mouth with arguments. The "will not" of old Jacob was often in his heart, "I *will not* let thee go except thou bless me." When this was the case he was oblivious of time and his surroundings. He seemed not to know whether he was in the flesh or out of it. But others knew that they were in the flesh, and frequently wished he would hasten to the Amen.

The only objection I ever heard to his prayers was that they were too long. He would sometimes pray you into a devotional spirit and then pray you out of it. I once heard a good woman say: "I knelt down when George Barrett prayed. For awhile I was very devout, and enjoyed his prayer. I then became so wearied and so worried that I promised the Lord if he would forgive me that time I would never kneel again when George Barrett led in prayer." But, as a rule, he lifted our souls near to God when he led our devotions. He was not only a good prayer, but a good talker. For many years he used to conduct meetings on the Western Branch—now

Churchland—every Sunday, and did much good among that people.

He was an able expounder of the Scriptures, and an earnest, effective speaker. He and Samuel Brewer, and William Morris and James Davis, and others whose names are not enrolled among the licentiates, were preaching the word and did effective missionary work in conducting meetings in destitute neighborhoods. I shall ever tenderly cherish the memory of George Barrett and feel that this centennial service would be incomplete without some allusion to this man of God. He was an intelligent, safe and prayerful Sunday-school teacher, earnestly desiring the salvation of his scholars. He was the direct agent in the hands of God in my regeneration and becoming a minister of the gospel.

Do permit me to give you the facts in the case. They are well calculated to stimulate and encourage faithful Sunday-school teachers. One Sunday he asked me to do him a certain favor on Monday. I replied, "I will do so with pleasure, if I live." He looked me lovingly in the eye, and said, "John, it is right for you to say, 'If I live,' for you may die before to-morrow. If you should, what have you done for Jesus, who has done so much for you? And what will you tell

Him is the reason you have done nothing for Him?"

That was a word in season. I then made up my mind that I would do something for Jesus, that I would love and serve Him. But, alas! in making the effort to do so, I made the fearful discovery that my heart was so depraved that I neither loved God, nor His service. And before I could do either I must have a new heart. I mourned my depravity and my sins, and accepted Jesus, not only as *my Saviour*, trusting to His righteousness alone; but, as my *Teacher*, to believe what He said; and as *my King*, to obey His commands. And I covenanted with Him if he would pardon me and give me a heart to love Him and His service that the remainder of my days, whether many or few, should all be devoted to Him. I hope He gave me such a heart. From that moment the vows of God were upon me. I could not lie unto the Almighty. Nothing was left me but to tell the Church the covenant I had made with God; and I said to them, Here am I, send me. So you will not wonder that I cherish the memory of this good man, though not technically, yet in reality, a preacher of the gospel, and that I wish the name of George Barrett enrolled among the ministers sent out by this Church. Another

man, Ebenezer Thomson, though never licensed, has been for many years a lay preacher, and is esteemed by his pastor in Philadelphia as his assistant.

There was another member of this Church in those days, whose name I will not mention, who was very near becoming a minister, and to all human appearances ought to have been one. And here to-night I deeply regret his name is not among the ordained ministers sent out from this church. He was to my boyish fancy the most fascinating youth I had ever met, and I have not seen one more fascinating since. He was not a native of Portsmouth. He came here to visit his kindred—prominent people in society and members of another denomination. He attended this Church occasionally, and, as I believed then, and believe now, was regenerated, baptized by Rev. Thomas Hume, and joined this Church. He felt he was called to preach the gospel. The Church was of the same opinion. Provision was made for him to enter the then Richmond Seminary (now the Richmond College) to study for the ministry.

Before entering the Seminary he visited his family on his native island. On his return to this city he fell in love with one of the most fascina-

ting young ladies of that day. No one could censure him for loving such a girl and no one could censure her for reciprocating the love of such a youth. It was a desperate love match; so desperate that it turned his head and his heart from the ministry and from the Seminary. Had that young man pursued his studies, entered the ministry and then married that same interesting woman, I am quite confident that he would be to-day the most distinguished and popular of all the ministers who have gone out from this Church.

A few years after he abandoned the idea of preaching he became indifferent and skeptical and walked no more with the people of God. He is not a member of the Church now. I said that I believed he was a child of God when he was baptized and joined this Church. If a child of God then, he is a child of God *now*. The Lord never disowns His children. I feel in my heart the assurance that before he dies God will heal his backsliding and restore unto him the joys of His salvation, and that he will testify for the Lord before he goes hence. Do not be startled at my theology. We must not forget, my brethren, that the Holy Spirit is the Teacher, the Comforter and the Sanctifier. He may leave a child of God as the *Comforter*, so that for many years he shall know

nothing of the consolation there is in Christ, and wander far away from the Lord. But the Holy Spirit as the *Teacher* and Sanctifier never leaves him. He is always after him, reminding him of his vows, recalling his past experience and aiming to bring him back.

The poor prodigal was just as much his father's son there among the swine, in rags, poverty hunger and desolation, as when he was at home, and the father's heart was constantly with him. The poor boy "came to himself" one day and got back to his home and to his father's arms. So I am persuaded it will be with this child of God. If I should hear of his restoration and witnessing for Jesus at any time I would not be surprised, for it is just what I have been praying for and expecting to hear these many years. I have not given him up, nor must you. I am sorry, oh! so sorry, that I cannot mention his name among the ministers sent out by this Church.

There is another Portsmouth boy now in the ministry who went out from this Church. He was baptized by the Rev. Thos. Hume 17th September, 1837, licensed to preach in 1838 and ordained in 1843. I have already made allusion to his conversion and uniting with this Church.

The Church saw fit to encourage the idea of his studying for the ministry. He went to the Richmond Seminary, to the Columbian College, D. C., and to Newton Theological Seminary, Massachusetts. He commenced his ministry at Jerusalem, Southampton County, Va., and Smithfield, Va., and Hebron, Southampton County, as a missionary of the Portsmouth Association. He organized the Church at Jerusalem and built the meeting-house there. Preached his first sermon in a new house at Hebron and then induced them to pull it down and build larger. He was in the field some two years or more, then went to Lynchburg, Va., where he worked hard in every sense of that word for nearly three years. Quite a number were added to the Church and order brought out of confusion. The miserable old meeting-house was pulled down during his pastorate there, one of the best things he did in that place. He left before the new house was finished, after he had traveled from Dan to Beersheba begging money to build it. While in Baltimore on his begging tour, he preached a few times and made a favorable impression on the members of the First Church. They gave him a unanimous and enthusiastic call which he accepted. He has been there thirty-eight years and

eight months and is there yet. This man has been *pastor* of only two Churches—the First Church in Lynchburg and the First Church in Baltimore. He did not consider himself a pastor, but a missionary to the other Churches in his first field of labor. So if there be any special honor in being the pastor of many Churches, then this man has but little honor of that kind, for he insists upon it that he has been *pastor* of but two Churches.

Some five years ago he preached a sermon which has been published—on the "Secrets of a Long Pastorate; or, Reminiscences of a Pastorate of Thirty-three Years in One Church." At the close of his thirty-seventh year he preached on "*The Trials of a Long Pastorate.*" If he is spared to the close of his fortieth year he will preach on "The *Blessings* of a Long Pastorate." When these are published, if any of you wish to know more about the ministerial career of this Portsmouth boy you can learn it more fully than it would be prudent for him to mention in this presence. Do indulge with a few reflections and I will relieve you.

First. Let parents, Sunday-school teachers and pastors learn from this discourse not to despise the day of small things. Do not always judge

what a boy may become by his origin, his surroundings and his personal appearance.

Many a most unpromising boy, when he joined a Church, has become a most prominent and useful minister of the gospel. Scarcely any one of the ministers mentioned on this occasion had much promise in the beginning. In your families and in your Sunday-schools there may be those whom God designs to fill some important niche in His Spiritual Temple. Act upon this supposition in family training, Sunday-school instruction and preaching. Honor childhood and determine to make the best of it.

Second. Be careful, very careful, how you encourage young men to enter the ministry. Much harm has been done by disregarding the exhortation, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." But the harm often antedates the ordination. It began when the man was encouraged to study for the ministry before he had *given proof to satisfy the Church* that he was called of God. Pastors often assume too much responsibility in this matter. Many a man has been pushed into the pulpit who should never have left the pew. Many a good layman and excellent deacon has been spoiled by making a poor preacher out of him. Many a man has been a blessing to his pastor

and to his Church so long as he remained in his pew, but a positive affliction to himself and to all concerned after he ascended the pulpit.

I could write a book made up of facts from my experience and observation showing the importance of caution in encouraging men to enter the ministry. Ambition for numbers in membership has been a great affliction to our Churches. Ambition for numbers in the ministry has been equally as great an affliction. Not every man who thinks he can preach, or thinks he is called to preach, or who has the gift of utterance, or whom we may love and esteem and would like to see a preacher, should be encouraged either to enter the ministry at once, or to pursue a course of study with reference to the ministry. Let him prove himself by his character—by his spirit of consecration—by his desire and efforts to save souls. So prove himself that the *Church* may be impressed that he is called of God. Then help him by your sympathy, prayers and money. On the line of ushering men into the ministry we ought to make haste slowly. I think I have kept more men out of the ministry than I ever induced to enter it. And I have lived long enough to see I neither sinned nor stumbled in so doing. While we should pray far more than we do for "The

Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest, and encourage and help all whom the Lord may call, yet emphatically we should *watch* as we pray. Watch that we discourage none whose duty it may be to enter the ministry. Watch that we encourage none who should never attempt to preach.

When a Church has been thus cautious, as I believe this Church has been in the main, and it sends forth a goodly number of useful, consecrated ministers, it has done a great work. And it is proof of its growth in wisdom, piety and power.

If this be so, then your growth in these Christian graces has been much greater in the last fifty years than in the first fifty. In the first half of the century the Church did not send forth a single minister. During the last half it has sent out thirteen ordained ministers and five licentiates. And the first minister this Church ever sent forth is here this evening to announce that fact, and he is a young man yet. May the Church in its next hundred years quadruple the first hundred, both in the quantity and the quality of the men it shall send forth to preach the glorions Gospel of the blessed Lord.

There is the name of another minister con-

nected with this Church, that I must mention before I take my seat. He was not sent forth from this Church, but was received into its membership after he had become a minister. He has been with you eighteen years. He has been proven and found faithful. God has blessed him and you have loved him. So long as this is so you ought not to send him out. The question should never be a long pastorate, but a *useful* one.

No eighteen years of the one hundred have been more abundant in good works and good results than those during which Rev. A. E. Owen, D.D., has been your pastor.

Now, my brethren, standing almost on the very spot, where, fifty-two years ago, I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, Teacher and King, and gave Him my heart, my life, my all, I can say with heart emphasis, "By the grace of God, I am what I am," and can testify to the goodness and the mercy of God. I have never in all these years regretted that act of consecration. My only regret has been that I have not been more faithful.

I then *thought* religion was a good thing—now I *know* it. That which was the guide of my youth is now the support of my age.

The longer I live and the more I serve my Divine Master, the more closely I study two books—God's book and the book of my own experience. The one tells me what He will do for me, the other tells me what He has done for me. When these two agree I feel the rocky ground of my position and can say with heart emphasis, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded He will keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." And now may you and I and all of us so live, so redeem our covenant vows, that God, even our God, may bless us in life, in death and in eternity. Amen and Amen!